A SKETCH OF THE PRESENT STATE OF OUR Political Relations WITH THE United States of North-America.

By JOSEPH FAUCHET,
EX-MINISTER OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC AT PHILADELPHIA.

Translated by the Editor of the Aurora.

PHILADELPHIA:
Printed by BENJ. FRANKLIN BACHE, No. 112, Market-street.
M,DCC,XCVII.

46
10. 23.
401

A SKETCH,(a) &c.

POLITICAL events have, like the phenomena of nature, their ſucceſſive changes and their progreſſion. The art of obſerving the one and the other, of watching their developments, of calculating their iſſue, conſtitutes the ſcience of the natural philoſopher and of the ſtateſman. The latter is never ſo profound as when he joins to the calculation of the different changes the power of directing, of ſubduing and of making inevitable inconveniencies bend to his views, or of neutralizing them by wiſe precautions. All thoſe who were enabled by their ſituation to pay ſome attention to our relations with America, have foreſeen the criſis of which we are now witneſſes: In fact, the courſe of events has neceſſarily brought it on, and nothing has delayed its approach, but the indifference and the apathy, into which the affairs of Europe had plunged our government, with regard to that nation.

Much has been written and much ſaid on this ſubject. The only reſult I have been able to draw from all that has been done in this reſpect is, that the public took ſome intereſt in it; and it is partly this conſideration that has determined me to offer ſome ideas on that ſubject. I have, perhaps, ſome right to do this. The nature of the functions I diſcharged near the American government, my perſonal ſituation, which places me beyond the reach of all ſuſpicion, either of ambitious views, or of partiality for the executive; the ſilence which I have hitherto preſerved, a ſilence which beſt ſuited my ſituation and the times; the indirect alluſions of which my adminiſtration has been the object, all engage me

(a) It is to be remarked, that this pamphlet appeared in Paris before the 4th of September; which gives a ſtronger character of impartiality to the animadverſions which it contains upon Paſtoret, Segur and Co. who, it has been endeavoured to perſuade the citizens of the United States were our friends; but who, in fact, were only the partiſans of our adminiſtration. *Note of the Tranſlator.*

to take up the pen, with the thorough conviction that I ſhall uſe it without timidity and without paſſion.

Paſſions! Why ſhould I bring them into a diſcuſſion like this? Do the perſonal connections I have had demand it? Theſe connections have been as impartial on my ſide, as they ever were on the part of any of my predeceſſors, and from this impartiality muſt have ſprung a reciptocal regard which ought to have left in my breaſt no reſentment to ſatisfy. I defy calumny to contradict theſe aſſertions.

The Preſident Waſhington granted me that eſteem which he could not refuſe to a man incapable of harmonizing with the open or ſecret enemies of his country. I have, in critical times, and during a ſtate of things, the unfavourable reflected impreſſions of which it was difficult to withſtand in foreign countries, enjoyed as much reſpect as ever a Miniſter of France enjoyed. As to the attacks, open or maſked, of which I may have been the object, they have no longer power to irritate me. I know too well of what value opinions are in times like thoſe we live in. The ſpirit of party creates and deſtroys reputations; the moſt profligate debauchees, [*proxenetes*] of the court of Charles II. are extolled as prodigies of honor and virtue, by the writers of their party. A man who is enlightened enough to form an opinion, reſolute enough to maintain it, ſhould ſhare its fate; it would be as cowardly on his part to ſhun this, as on the part of a ſoldier to ſculk from the danger of the corps in which he is embodied.

An orator who poſſeſſes a reputation proportioned to the importance † which his party attaches to him, has taken the liberty to caſt upon my predeceſſor near the United States, a cenſure which he ſeems to have intended to extend to me. He knows neither what relates to me perſonally, nor to my adminiſtration; his ſpeech is all of a piece; he has drawn his reflections on men, and his arguments on things, from the ſame ſources. I may, perhaps, in the courſe of this eſſay, convince him that he has been impoſed upon with reſpect to the latter; and if he thence draws the conſequence, that he may have been deceived with regard to perſons, I ſhall

† The Citizen Paſtoret.

congratulate myſelf, on account of the Citizen Genet, my predeceſſor, againſt whom he has more particularly directed his animadverſions; and as that Citizen is abſent, and it is poſſible that the opinion of the deputy of Paris may not be ſo indifferent to him as it is to me, I ſhall at leaſt have contributed to rectify, with reſpect to him, the ideas of a man, who, without intereſt to defame him, can have none to perſiſt in an injuſtice which he has committed upon truſt.

Thoſe who have taken the trouble of conferring on me the reputation of inactivity, will be aſtoniſhed to ſee me appear in public. I ſhould be ſorry if this work were to change their opinion with regard me; I ſhould fear they might diſcover in it ſymptoms of that kind of activity which I prize but little, and which conſiſts in taking advantage of one's phyſical powers, by appearing every where, and multiplying one's-ſelf in a manner: I ſhall endeavour to prove that ſtudy may be united to repoſe, and that a man may have thought, without having ſpoken much or written much.

THERE are circumſtances in the mutual relations of nations, when their governments can no longer agree with each other, and when it becomes neceſſary to reſort to extraordinary means of explanation, and often even to the cruel extremities of war. Our preſent poſition, in regard to the United States, ſeems, at the firſt glance, to have all the ſymptoms of that deplorable alternative. However, we muſt not be deceived by theſe outward appearances; great as the animoſity may be which has hitherto, on both ſides, marked the miniſterial diſpatches and manifeſtoes, yet there exiſts ſtill a point of contact; it is the common intereſt, which reprobates a rupture. By a ſtrict analyſis of the acts of both parties, it may nevertheleſs be ſeen, that moderation is on the ſide of the Executive Directory.

It is ſufficient to read the notes which the Secretary of State, Mr. Pickering, has ſigned ſince his coming into the miniſtry, to be perfectly convinced that the American cabinet has, with regard to us, from the moment that the diſcuſſions began to become ſerious, run through all the degrees of the moſt marked contempt. It has

proceeded ſucceſſively from an indecent levity to the tone of inſult, a tone which reigns from one end to the other of the voluminous performance which has been directed to Mr. Pinckney, under the title of diſpatches, and which its agents at Paris have had tranſlated and circulated profuſely. The Directory has confined itſelf to acting, and we ſhall ſee how far it has had a right of doing ſo. The notes directly exchanged at Paris breathe only coldneſs and calmneſs: Thoſe forwarded to the United States might have been better adapted to the circumſtances, the localities, and the government, in the name of which they were iſſued; but they do not, however, in the leaſt deviate from decency and moderation.

Let us not deceive ourſelves: Mr. Pickering, when he ſigned the laſt diſpatch of June 16, 1797, foreſaw that he would find defenders at Paris; he knew what Mr. Pinckney afterwards wrote him from Paris, that the new elections would give another aſpect to affairs * in France; and that his manifeſto would arrive opportunely to ſecond the arrangements of ſome men, who waited only for that moment to break ſilence. (b) It is to be regretted that ſuch are the paſſions at this day; that men feel no repugnance in taking a text of denunciation againſt the executive branch of the government, from a diſpatch which bears all the characters of the deepeſt enmity: It is yet more to be regretted, that it ſhould be believed poſſible, in ſuch caſes, to ſeparate the ſubject matter of diſpute from the declamatory part; and that entirely neglecting the former, which is the moſt important, the latter ſhould be dwelt on without reflection, and without bounds. It was a very important queſtion to be ſolved,

* Report of Mr. Pickering to the Secretary of State on his reception at Paris.

(b) The connection between our adminiſtration and the royaliſt party, lately overthrown in France, has long been ſuſpected, and cannot now be doubted. Thus we ſee that Meſſrs. Pickering, & Co. carry on the ſame intrigues in other countries, for which they ſo vehemently blame, and without being able to adduce proofs of their exiſtence, the French agents here. What a pity that Mr. Pickering cannot command an annual appropriation for ſecret ſervices; we ſhould then have our *Pit* as we have our *George*!—[*Translator.*

whether a right exiſted of bringing forward a queſtion of that nature? The ſtep being once taken, it ought at leaſt to have been ſupported by a thorough knowledge of the ſubject of diſcuſſion.

However, whatever may have been the motive of thoſe extraordinary motions, the Directory is, nevertheleſs, on the eve of entering into negociations on the different points in diſpute with the cabinet of Philadelphia. It is readily perceived, what diſadvantage it will have in this negociation, after what has paſſed in the councils; but ſetting aſide, for the moment, the probabilities of ſucceſs which the two parties may have, it would be important to furniſh thoſe who are intereſted in that tranſaction with the means of calculating its direction and iſſue. Such is the object of this ſketch. We ſhall firſt ſummarily review our grievances, and examine their weight.

It would be exceeding the bounds of a work deſigned for the public, to give a minute detail of all the wrongs with which France reproaches the Federal Government. A very detailed account may be found in the diſpatch of Mr. Pickering to Mr. Pinckney, of which mention has already been made. We ſhall ſay then, that our complaints relate in the firſt place to the inexecution and the violation of treaties. What are the treaties that unite America to France? They are well known; They conſiſt of a treaty of alliance offenſive and defenſive, (c) and a treaty of Amity, Navigation and Commerce, both ſigned on the ſame day. Theſe treaties are the firſt contracts which the United States ſigned as a nation. They eſtabliſh therefore, in favour of France, rights anterior to any rights, which other nations may have afterwards acquired; agreeably to the principle of the law of nations, which gives to the oldeſt treaties the preference over thoſe more recently concluded; as long as a war has not deſtroyed them. France has by theſe treaties reſerved none of the advantages which the ſituation of the United States, might have induced her to exact. She has contented herſelf with recognizing the ſtipulations moſt common, and which form the baſis of all trea-

(c) Mr. Fauchet is here in an error. Our treaty with France is only *defenſive* and not offenſive. *Tranſlator.*

ties of that nature; and the benefit ſhe might expect from it, proceeded leſs from the intrinſic value of the ſtipulations themſelves, than from the priority which ſhe had acquired over other ſtates. The treaty of alliance was, without any doubt, obligatory on the Americans, notwithſtanding the change that took place in our government, whatever men ſold to Great Britain, and blinded by perſonal hatred may have written againſt the immortal negociator* of that treaty. We have not required the execution of that treaty, although the *caſus fœderis* has exiſted in its full force. This moderation on our part ought, at leaſt, to have ſecured to us the enjoyment of the advantages ſtipulated by the other treaty, in the eventual caſe of the neutrality of one of the two parties.

Nothing proves more the want of caution or the exceſſive good-will of our negociators for the United States, than the principles they have adopted in that treaty, relatively to the above eventual caſe of neutrality. It was eaſy to foreſee, that actual reciprocity could not exiſt for a long time to come: For it is difficult to conceive a combination of circumſtances which, involving the United States in a war of any importance, ſhould permit France to remain neutral. However, if France did not loſe ſight of the object, towards which, for a century paſt, all her plans were directed, that of undermining the commercial preponderance of England, ſhe ought to have uſed all poſſible circumſpection, with regard to the advantage ſhe was about giving to a flag deſtined to be the carrier of all the other commercial nations in time of war. She ought to have taken the greater precautions in this reſpect, as the ſimilarity of manners and of language greatly favoured the abuſe, which England might make of the American flag and ſailors.

Forgetting thoſe great intereſts, guided by the idea more generous than politic, not to depart, in any of our treaties, from the principles of neutrality, of which we proclaimed ourſelves the protectors, M. de Vergennes treated upon the liberal baſis of thoſe principles. The only equivalent which ſeemed to be reſerved for us, was the privilege of conducting our prizes and our privateers to the United States, without the local officers tak-

* Benjamin Franklin.

ing cognizance of the validity of the former; afterwards that of our ships of war being allowed to enter their ports and victual, to the exclusion of those of our enemies, which, in all possible combinations of events, was as much as to say, those of Great Britain and her allies. This second clause contained a pointed and extraordinary favour, but it will cease to appear such by the developments which here follow.

To those who know the situation of the American continent, relative to the West Indies, the most apparent, if not the most real centre of the commerce of Europe, it will appear evident that the permission to carry our prizes to the United States, to the exclusion of England, was of great value. England was as well aware of it as we; therefore, as soon as the present war threatened to break out, she employed all possible arts to neutralize the eventual exercise of that right: Since the commencement of hostilities, she has done every thing to shackle it: And finally, as the sentiments of the American cabinet assumed an aspect more and more malevolent, she progressed towards the object which she wished to attain, that of rendering that right illusory, and even ruinous to France.

In fact, we have seen numbers of prizes stopt in the ports of the United States, under the most frivolous pretexts, and delivered up to the illicit examination of the American tribunals: It is particularly in the ports of the southern states that this scandalous proceeding has been observed. These prizes detained, brought before courts whose forms are more or less expensive, have finally been restored to the captured, and often ruined the captors. Supposing that among the pretexts held up to justify so extraordinary a conduct, some were valid, the demand repeatedly made to place the captured and the captors on an equal footing, by requiring of the plaintiff, whoever he might be, a security which should shelter against a prosecution evidently unjust, ought to have been acquiesced in. The American government, after having solemnly recognised our right to carry our prizes into its ports, permitted their sale in the same ports. This second privilege, although merely gratuitous, turned to the advantage of its custom-houses, and its neutrality re-

mained not the leſs inviolate; for the right to diſpoſe of the property, was but a conſequence of that of conducting that property into its ports; a conſequence which, in reality, but little intereſts the captured. But the arts of England ſoon cauſed this favor to be conſidered in a different light: It was reſolved to deprive us of it. To attain this object, different pretexts were deviſed for ſeizing the prize; at laſt the advantage was openly taken from us.

The pretexts of the federal government, for taking cognizance of French prizes, are reducible to two; capture within the limits of its juriſdiction, and capture by veſſels armed within its waters. No objection has ever been made to recognizing the juſtice of the firſt principle: It would be conteſting the ſovereignty of a ſtate to raiſe doubts on that head. The ſecond is much leſs reaſonable: It has been conceded only as a natural conſequence of the ſatisfaction which was given, with reſpect to the privateers armed in the United States, under the miniſter Genet; but giving the latitude which the government of the United States contends for, was manifeſting an evidence of ill-will: A privateer was accuſed of having been armed in the United States, had ſhe but taken in an old muſket, or opened a port-hole before ſhut up.

However, a very great proof of conciliation was given, by propoſing that all theſe ſubjects ſhould be ſubmited to an amicable negociation between the miniſter of France and the American government; by this means the intereſts of the two nations would have been ſecured, and the treaty which requires that *the officers of the two parties ſhall not take cognizance of the validity of prizes*, would have been reſpected. The American government rejected all theſe overtures: Its motive of action was a ſervile condeſcenſion for our enemy, and it anſwered all our remonſtrances by ſaying, that when an affair was once before its tribunals it could not withdraw it, nor give us any ſatisfaction in that reſpect.

This was in general the ſhield which the government conſtantly oppoſed to us. To diſcuſs the value of that quibble, it would firſt be neceſſary to examine whether we can admit it, who have a treaty; whether a government can

oppoſe internal laws to a political compact: Then the federal government might be aſked, whether it is not the ſubterfuge of bad faith, even according to their own conſtitution? Whether its admiralty courts, by taking cognizance of matters, from which they are excluded by a ſolemn treaty, do not violate the clauſe of the conſtitution, which ſays, that treaties are the ſupreme law of the land, *a paramount law*, to uſe the expreſſion of the Engliſh juriſts.

Without ſuggeſting to itſelf thoſe doubts, the American adminiſtration has advanced with perſeverance to the end marked out by its malevolence towards us, and by its predilection for Great Britain. Its tribunals, influenced by the ſame ſpirit which directed that cabinet, no longer kept within bounds; the dignity of the republic has been on an hundred occaſions committed, and thoſe who fitted out privateers ruined.

I am ſenſible of the juſt value which ought to be ſet upon this portion of our grievances; accordingly it is not my intention to examine the degree of favour which the fitters of privateers, ſuch as thoſe whoſe intereſts have been involved in the United States, deſerve; no one is more conſcious than I am, how little reaſon there is to be forward in riſking ſerious contention on account of concerns of privateers in general, and of thoſe we treat of in particular. But it is with governments as with individuals: In matters of reputation as well as of intereſt, both are eaſily loſt, as ſoon as we ceaſe to be jealous of preſerving them in all caſes.

Beſides, the buſineſs was to put treaties to a trial, the application of which could not till then have been called for. It was, therefore, important to watch leſt conſtructions ſhould ſupercede their literal meaning; leſt departures from the treaty, upon the ground of momentary accommodation, ſhould become the ſource of a number of precedents which would, without fail, be marſhalled againſt us in future.

As to the right of entering with and victualling our ſhips of war in the United States, it was equally well eſtabliſhed. The excluſion of England could not be a ſubject of doubt, agreeable to the terms in which the 17th article is expreſſed. In order not to give to that exclu-

ſion a character too repugnant to neutrality, it was reſtrained to ſhips who ſhould have made ſome prizes upon us.

The Federal government wiſhing to elude here, the literal ſenſe, has entangled itſelf in its own interpretations. It contended that that excluſion related only to the ſhips entering with their prizes, and then to the prizes themſelves. The Engliſh Miniſter, Mr. Hammond, proteſted, in the name of his court, againſt that interpretation, and it is, as yet, unknown how the American cabinet has been able to conciliate its interpretation with the contradictory interpretations of both the Miniſters of France and England.

Could the wording of that article offer the leaſt ſhadow of difficulty, it would be ſufficient to recur to the circumſtances, and to the *enſemble* of the negociation of 1778, to remove it. Mr. de Vergennes, in order to tranquillize the United States with reſpect to our views, and to guard againſt every means of diſunion and diſtruſt, itipulated, at the deſire of the American Plenipotentiary, the formal renunciation to any eventual poſſeſſion by France, of any of the territories ceded to Great Britain, at the peace of '63, on the Northern continent of America. This renunciation was abſolute; we loſt thereby the hopes of obtaining, by war or by negociation, a port in the Gulph of St. Laurence, or in Nova-Scotia, in order to balance the advantages which the excluſive poſſeſſion of all the maritime ports of that continent gives to England.

Had the independence of the United States not ſecured us, in its ports, the means of counterbalancing that poſition of England, we ought to have thought of taking advantages of the war and of conquering for our own account. Our contrary conduct is explained by the clauſes which ſecure to us, in the eventual caſe of the neutrality of the United States, the uſe of its ports for our ſquadrons; without this the whole negociation would have been a mere folly on our part, and this cannot be maintained, knowing thoſe who were charged to ſtipulate in our behalf.

The two grievances which we have juſt examined would not, however, have been worth entering into ſerious

diſcuſſions about, if they had ſtood alone. If the Federal government had acted in other reſpects with ſincerity, it would have advanced ſome plauſible pretexts to attenuate the impropriety of its conduct upon thoſe two points. An infant trade, deſtitute of every means of protection; the New World abandoned to the deſpotiſm of England, and as it were to its diſcretion; preſerved from total ſubjection, by ſtupendous convulſions, as terrible as the dangers of which they diminiſhed the chance; (*d*) the uncertainty which characterized the firſt events of the war; a government to ſettle; wounds to heal, an empty treaſury, a nation without money and without an army;—ſuch are the motives, founded on intereſt, which the American cabinet might have pleaded to juſtify, in confidential explanations, the deſertion of its allies, and its partiality for England. But malevolence was the ſoul of its actions: Governments do not, more than individuals, ſquare their conduct according to the external forms of a correſpondence; the intention (*le ſous entendu*) is always what is on both ſides endeavoured to be found out. The American Executive ſaved us this trouble by ſigning with England, and in the midſt of hoſtilities, without giving us any previous notice, while on the contrary, they were promiſing to do no ſuch thing, a treaty derogatory to that of 1778, containing clauſes hoſtile to us, and calculated for the preſent war.

A politician whoſe experience gives him the right to expreſs an opinion upon this ſubject;* a member of the legiſlative body who has treated it without having a knowledge of it, have both juſtified at once the American government, on the ſubject of the treaty of London. Both reſt their opinion on the ground, that that government had the right to make this treaty, and that it was in no manner anſwerable to us for its conduct. I will neither inſult the one nor the other by ſuppoſing

(*d*) There is ſome obſcurity in this ſentence. By *New World*, we imagine the Weſt Indies are meant; and that the writer alludes to the manumiſſion of the blacks, thro' means of which the French government prevented the conqueſt of their iſlands; but occaſioned "ſtupendous (internal) convulſions as terrible as the dangers of which they diminiſhed the chance."

* Citizen Segur the elder.

them ſerious in this mode of reaſoning. This argument has already been ſucceſsfully anſwered: It may beſides be ſaid, that the firſt of the writers in queſtion is not ignorant, that one of the immediate conſequences of an alliance is, that the allies ſhould communicate to each other the negociations which might produce any change in their relative poſitions, that all nations, at leaſt thoſe wiſhing to remain above ſuſpicion, act in this manner. This writer is too well verſed in the negociations of the end of this century, and eſpecially in thoſe which have relation to the movements in the North, of which we have ſeen the *denouement*, to lay down ſeriouſly, as a general poſition, that a ſtate has the power of changing, at its pleaſure and without any one's finding fault, its external relations. Circumſtances might be recalled to his recollection in which he has acted on very different principles. As to the declamations which the orator (Paſtoret) has recourſe to upon this point, they may, without inconvenience, remain without an anſwer; they could only be combated by imitating them. If it was neceſſary to carry further the refutation of this ſophiſm, it might be ſaid, that if the American government had a right to negociate the treaty, it ought not to have conſtantly aſſured us, at Philadelphia and at Paris, that there would be none concluded.

It is, however, a ſecondary queſtion which we have juſt examined. The firſt and moſt important of all, reſpecting the treaty of London, is whether it wounds our intereſts, and if it was rightful for us to ſhelter ourſelves from the neceſſary effects of that act upon us.

No one has hitherto contended that the treaty is not unfavourable to us; the principles of neutrality, which form the baſis of ours, are completely ſacrificed in it; contrary principles are therein recognized. To render this part of the diſcuſſion more clear, let us go back to a few principles.

The prerogative, which neutral nations enjoy in time of war, is the portion of the law of nation moſt ſubject to diſpute. Neutrals having a great intereſt in enjoying the moſt extenſive liberty for their commerce; belligerent powers, who have not a maritime force to give

convoys, having an equal intereſt that their commerce may continue under a neutral flag during hoſtilities, it is clear, that thoſe two kinds of powers muſt, neceſſarily, have conſtantly endeavoured to give to the trade of neutrals the utmoſt latitude of freedom: Therefore do we ſee all the treaties concluded for a century and a half back, by either one or other of the two kinds of powers which we have deſignated, contain principles extremely liberal in this reſpect. Authors who have written on the law of nations have laid down the maxim, that enemy's property does not ceaſe being ſo under a friendly flag, and conſequently may be ſeized. The treaties of which we ſpeak above, eſtabliſh, on the contrary, that the friendly flag protects enemy's property, and places it beyond violation; this is what is commonly called the modern neutrality.

Of all the powers, which by their nature are moſt frequently engaged in maritime wars, France is the one which has defended the laſt mentioned principles with moſt warmth. England, whoſe commerce, even in time of war, is always carefully protected, has ſhewn itſelf but little diſpoſed to acknowledge them; often however ſhe has admitted them in her treaties, either becauſe ſhe was forced ſo to do, or becauſe ſhe expected to ſecure immediate advantages as an equivalent for this condeſcention; but, whatever the letter of theſe treaties may have ſaid, ſhe has rarely acted in conformity to them upon this point. In practice ſhe has always adhered to the ancient maxim, that the friendly flag does not protect enemy's property; when ſhe has purſued a contrary conduct, it is when ſhe has been obliged to it by leagues capable of overawing her, as in 1780.

The above is a ſtatement, of which Mr. Pickering himſelf will not queſtion the candour. I proceed. France, in giving this example of her conſtancy in maintaining the modern neutrality, could not however always wiſh it to its detriment. This would happen if ſhe alone admitted it in favour of the other maritime powers; for, in this caſe, her enemies might ſhip their property under neutral flag, which France would be obliged to re-

ſpect; and the enemies of France not having, with that nation, any ſimilar treaty, the property that France might ſhip under that flag would enjoy no ſecurity. In this reſpect, the former government cannot be accuſed of having been guilty of ſuch an overſight. The powers which, in their treaties with us, have ſtipulated in favour of theſe principles, have alſo ſtipulated for them with England; hence it follows, that if England was to execute her treaties with thoſe nations, in caſe of their remaining neutral, we might tranſport our property in time of war, under their flag, as England tranſports hers. Hence we have more than once required that neutral powers, whoſe flag was inſulted to our detriment, ſhould force England to execute her treaties, and to conform herſelf to the ſame principles. This is what we did more particularly as to Holland in 1777. This demand brought about the rupture between that power and England in 1780.

America had yet no treaties in 1778; thoſe ſhe contracted with us were, as we have already ſaid, her firſt political compacts. When recognizing in thoſe treaties the principles of *modern neutrality* in their full ſcope, we could not ſurely expect that the United States would conſent, in their poſterior treaties, to contrary principles: It is particularly the nature of their ſtipulations with England that was calculated to embarraſs us. We could not deſire that that power ſhould be at liberty to make uſe of their flag at its pleaſure, while the ſame advantage ſhould be interdicted to us.

Such, however, is the ſtate of things which has been brought about by the treaty of London. The United States have explicitly abandoned, in that treaty, the modern neutrality; whence it reſults that England may legally plunder us under the American flag, and that we are to reſpect what ſhe places under that flag.

The principles of neutrality in queſtion, extend alſo to a part of the commerce of neutrals liable to many diſcuſſions; it is the ſubject of contraband. According to the ancient law of nations, all that was deſtined for the enemy, all that left an enemy's port was contraband, and more particularly articles uſed in naval or land arſenals and even proviſions.

It is eaſily perceived how inconvenient and ruinous this barbarous rule muſt be to nations whoſe whole wealth conſiſts in the exportation of thoſe articles; hence it is the northern powers who have modified, in their treaties, this antique right. At this day the modern neutrality ranks as contraband only articles fit to be uſed immediately for offence or defence, and thoſe which muſt be wrought before they can be uſed in this way are excluded. Proviſions are contraband only in the caſe of their being carried to a blockaded and beſieged place; ſuch are alſo the principles of our treaty of 1778 as to contraband.

The treaty of London recognizes the ancient law of nations in this reſpect; that is, it makes it legal for England to ſeize all objects fit for ſhip yards, which the Americans might bring us; while we are to reſpect thoſe ſame articles carried into England under the ſame flag. As to proviſions it is left at her will to declare when they are contraband, that is ſeizable, when going to France or to our colonies, upon American veſſels.

This difference, ſurely, is ſtriking, and yet this is what the citizen Paſtoret finds ſcarcely worthy of ſlight animadverſion. The diſadvantages of our poſition are palpable with two treaties ſo diſſimilar. Have we no legal means of re-acting againſt ſuch a ſtate of things, and of placing ourſelves preciſely on the footing on which England finds herſelf ſtanding by her treaty?

There were only two means of doing it. Firſt, by calling forth a legiſlative deciſion, which ſhould ſuſpend the clauſes of our treaty of 1778, which recognize a doctrine contrary to that which is found in the treaty of London. Second, by a mere executive act, it was in our power to take advantage of the 2d article of the treaty of 1778, which guarantees to us all the advantages of navigation and commerce which might be granted to other powers,—and place, by means of this article, the republic upon the ſame footing as England. This is the road which the directory has preferred: It is the moſt proper, and is ſtrictly conſtitutional. The other would have given, perhaps, a firmer baſis to its ſyſtem of reprisals, and would have prevented much clamour.

It is here that to each ſhould be ſtrictly given what is his due. The directory, or rather the miniſters of tht directory have ſhewn, in this buſineſs, ſome irreſolution, and a defective knowledge of the ſubject they had to handle. It cannot be conceived how it was poſſible to paſs the reſolve of the 14th Meſſidor, IVth year, which orders the cruiſers of the republic to act towards neutrals, as the Engliſh conduct themſelves towards them. It is not right to give orders to the armed force to act, in circumſtances ſo delicate, according to a ſyſtem of which the principle only is laid down to them, and of which the cabinet alone poſſeſſes the detail. Did the privateers know how the Engliſh conducted themſelves towards neutrals? Were they acquainted with the deciſions of the admiralty courts of London? In a word, that reſolve was a text which the directory ſhould have given for development to an intelligent miniſter, and if it was to be made public, it ſhould only have iſſued as a warning declaration to the neutral powers, as has been done frequently in preceding wars.

The decree of the 12th Ventoſe, which was paſſed afterwards, goes more directly towards the object; but ſtrikes beyond it. The miniſter of juſtice, whoſe department, by the by, had nothing to do with the buſineſs, ſhould have confined himſelf to means abſolutely co-ordinate to the principal object, and not ſuffer himſelf to be led away by the inſinuations of ignorance or intereſt, which have forced from him clauſes that are incorporated in wiſe and moderate ſyſtem of repriſals, only as they give it an odious ſhade. The miniſter who has drawn up that decree will readily perceive which article I mean to ſpeak of: He ought eſpecially not to have taken, according to the letter, the article relative to pirates, which is, in the treaty of London, a common clauſe, and imitated from a ſimilar article in ours. To ſum up, I ſay of that reſolve, that the directory did their duty, but that the miniſters have miſſed doing theirs. This reſolve, ſuch as it ſtands, becomes the ſource of a croud of vexatory proceedings, which are only detrimental to the end, and throw much embarraſſment in the negociation which is about being opened.

The decree, ſuch as it ought to have been, would have excited no complaint from the American government; or if that government had made any, they would have been anſwered by producing the treaty of London. But now they complain, that we go further than that treaty itſelf, and it is difficult to anſwer this objection.

Theſe acknowledgments will appear ſtrange to that ſpecies of men, who conſider the nature of the ſubject which I comment on as their excluſive property, and who conſider the ardent friends of liberty as beings guided by paſſion, and beyond all moderation.

I write without the intention of making myſelf friends among them, and my only view is to furniſh data to impartial and enlightened men: I neither ſeek applauſe nor fear blame. There are, beſides, ſo few ſituations in which one can ſpeak the truth, that it is neceſſary to ſeize with avidity the occaſion of publiſhing it when it preſents itſelf.

We have examined our grievances, and weighed the meaſures of repriſals taken by the government. I might, in ſupport of my opinions, have cited fragments of the ſpeeches delivered on this ſubject in the late extraordinary ſeſſion of congreſs; but this would lead to uſeleſs prolixity. I invite the citizen Paſtoret to read thoſe ſpeeches: He may find in them a model for diſcuſſions of this kind, and he will learn how theſe ſubjects are handled in a legiſlative body. There remains for me to ſay ſomething of the circumſtances, political and moral, which have prepared, ripened, and accelerated the preſent criſis, and throw together ſome ideas on the means of terminating the differences.

It is a very ſingular political phenomenon at firſt view, to ſee France ready to draw the ſword with America, her pupil, twenty years after having raiſed her, or at leaſt after having contributed to raiſe her to the rank of nations. But this event ceaſes to ſurprize, when we ſee Lewis XIV in a conteſt with that Holland which Henry IV and Lewis XIII aſſiſted in raiſing triumphant out of an unequal conteſt with the houſe of Auſtria; and that ſame houſe of Bragance, which owed to us the throne of Portugal, detach itſelf from us immediately on the peace of the Pyrenees.

Whence then ariſes that fatality which has produced the proverb, that nations and governments are ungrateful? Is the fault to be attributed to the benefactor or to the protected? The three events which have above claimed our attention will explain this enigma. Requiring too much on the part of he who confers the obligation; on the part of the obliged, a ſtubborneſs of conduct which ariſes from the perpetual ſuſpicion that its independence is menaced, for the very reaſon, that ſome foundation might be ſuppoſed to exiſt for ſuch pretenſions: Theſe are the two principles which, with the claſhing of intereſts, contribute to break alliances founded on eminent ſervices. Theſe are the elements which become the baſis of the intrigue of powers, which have an intereſt to ſeparate the two allies. (e)

However, going from the general to the particular, we dont perceive that France is to be reproached with reſpect to the United States, as their benefactor. I take up the treaty of 1778; I ſee in it no excluſive advantage in our favor, and I am far from conſidering the French negociators criminal on this account. I run over the reports of the two allies during the war, from 78, when we began to co-operate, to 82: I ſee nothing in them that looks like a ſuperior, arrogating to himſelf a controul over a ſubordinate power. The negociation of peace heaps the meaſure to this generoſity: The independence of America was made the *ſine qua non* of peace. This preliminary fixed, the allies negociated ſeparately their intereſts, ſo that there could not be room for even the ſlighteſt complaints. Mr. Jay* has tried, it is true,

(e) Taleyrand Perigord, the preſent French miniſter of foreign affairs, appears, by a publication which was given with his name, ſhortly after his arrival in France, to have had more correct notions on this ſubject. The influence which our commercial connections with England have upon our politics, is the chief cauſe of the alienation of our adminiſtration from France and predilection for Britain. And this cauſe will operate, until the French can rival the Britiſh with their manufactures in our market; or until the agricultural part of our nation determine no longer to draw their politics with their merchandize from our commercial cities.

Tranſlator.

* One of the American plenipotentiaries at Paris; the ſame who ſigned the treaty with England in 1794.

to raiſe clouds over this negociation, and has accuſed our cabinet: Already in 1783 he meditated to ground on theſe accuſations, a ſyſtem of detraction and calumny, directed againſt the deſerved influence which the war gave us in America. From that time his confidential tools have not ceaſed to retail the ſame calumnies; until at laſt the federal government has judged fit to introduce them in its manifeſto of the 16th January laſt. But theſe vain attempts will be baffled by the facts which contradict loudly our detractors. The peace of '83 does not prove that France has counteracted the intereſts of America: It proves only (and this incident is due to Mr. Jay) that the Americans infringed the agreement which the allies had made, of not ſigning one without the others *(f)* Is France to be criminated for having been unwilling to divide with the United States her Newfoundland fiſheries? Is ſhe culpable for not having ſuſtained againſt Spain, her ancient ally, pretenſions tending to her detriment and ſupported by Mr. Jay, for the ſole end, perhaps, of having a pretext for complaint? If Mr. Oſwald, empowered to treat with the Americans, in the name of Great Britain, did raiſe doubts of the ſincerity of France in the negociations, are we rather to believe that France was perfidious, than retort theſe ſuſpicions upon Mr. Oſwald and upon his maſters?*

It is eaſy at this day to underſtand in this fabulous narration what belongs to its author: His jealouſy againſt Franklin; the ſtings which his pride had felt at Madrid: The excentricities of thoſe two paſſions which naturally diſturbed the mind of Mr. Jay, by raiſing a thouſand phantoms, are the ingredients of which his hatred for us is made up, and conſtitute the qualifications which have rendered him worthy of ſigning the treaty of London. From this it is eaſy to bring to its true ſtand-

(f) If France had taken umbrage at this ſtep, which it appears was prompted by Mr. Jay, what would have been the ſituation of the United States? It gave her good reaſon for breaking with us;—ſhe might have patched up her peace with England, and have left us to maintain a ſecond ſtruggle with that power, and ſingly. *Translator.*

* See anſwer of Mr. Pickering to Mr. Pinckney.

ard that part of the manifeſto of the 16th January, which develops our pretended perfidy from the very outſet of our alliance, and the clue of the ridiculous artifice, by means of which Mr. Pickering, prompted by Mr. Jay, has hoped to deceive the Americans on the ſubject of our complaints, is eaſily diſcovered.

I own, that ſince the beginning of the revolution, we are liable to ſome reproaches. The National Convention, at the beginning of its ſeſſion, wiſhed to acquire the good will of the Federal government, by accuſing our former government of perfidy. Theſe aſſertions, founded on preſumption and contradicted by facts, ought never to be uttered by a government ſucceeding another. It was wrong to record the ſame idea and the ſame error in the inſtructions of the Miniſter Genet, which have been made public in the United States; and Genet was ſtill more in the wrong to iſſue that publication; but the proclamations of the Convention, or the inſtructions of the Miniſter can never convince in oppoſition to facts which one word is ſufficient to reſtore to perfect purity.

I alſo grant, that carried away by the torrent of circumſtances; ſowered by an oppoſition which he juſtly attributed to a ſecret ill-will; thrown out of the bounds of moderation by the dangers of his country, and more anxious to arrive at his end, than ſtudious to combat the pretexts on which the Federal government leaned to counteract him,—Genet committed faults; carried the praiſe-worthy firmneſs of a miniſter beyond what his poſition permitted, and ſubſtituted, ſometimes, to the manly pride which becomes an agent attached to his country, the language of indignation, which is never ſucceſsfully uſed in diplomatic affairs. I grant, that biaſſed by example, and ſowered by the ſame circumſtances*, our conſuls ſometimes paſſed the bounds of ſtrict propriety, and beyond the ſphere of their authority. But could this juſtify the hoſtile ſyſtem which we daily perceived developing itſelf? Has not the French govern-

* I do not pretend to judge the Conſuls without appeal; their motives were as pure as their patriotiſm: It gratifies me to pay them here the tribute of my eſteem; and I muſt openly expreſs my ſurpriſe at the government permitting their zeal and their talents to remain in inactivity, while!—*ſed ſuperant*, &c.

ment even in the midſt of the greateſt political ſtorms, ſhewn a remarkable eagerneſs to redreſs the founded grievances which have been preſented to them? Has not then the denunciation of Genet by Robeſpierre at the Jacobin club; the cruel orders directed againſt that Miniſter, and which have deprived the Republic of one of its ſincereſt friends, been able to extinguiſh the flames of reſentment? Have not the committees of Public Safety of the 2d and of the 3d year reſpected the neutrality guaranteed to the United States by the treaty of 1778, as religouſly as famine, and the ſavage war carried on againſt us, permitted? Was it not at the moment when the means of ſatisfying ſome complaints, made by the Miniſter Mr. Monroe, were under diſcuſſion at Paris, that Mr. Jay ſigned in London the treaty which was to ſtrike a blow at our honor and our intereſts, ſo ſure as to give Mr. Pitt the occaſion, at the opening of the next ſeſſion of Parliament, to make it a ſubject of triumph? Let the partizans of the Federal government anſwer theſe queſtions, and then we may ceaſe to believe that a leaven of hatred had poſſeſſion of its mind, and that it ſeized with eagerneſs the opportunities which afforded a plauſible pretext of putting aſide the maſk.

Every thing proves, in fact, that hatred as much as the conſciouſneſs of weakneſs guided the American adminiſtration in its conduct towards us. General Waſhington ceaſed to view our revolution with a favourable eye, as ſoon as he ſaw La Fayette and the king ſtruck, whom he delighted in calling the protector and father of his people. All the individuals who compoſed his council, except Mr. Jefferſon; all thoſe who had the right, by their reputation and their former ſervices, to influence his conduct through their correſpondence, excepting the Moultries, the Livingſtons, the Clintons and the Samuel Adams', all were united againſt us and ſtrengthened him in his hoſtile intentions.* It is the general opinion

* Let us attend to a Member of Congreſs from Virginia, on the ſubject of this marked hatred of a certain claſs of men for France, and the extraordinary inſinuations which the Britiſh faction throw out againſt the friends to principles and of liberty, of being under foreign influence. "I hear calumny attacking the amendment which I propoſe; and becauſe its tendency is to conciliate, accuſing me of being under French influence: Strange phantom, which is uſed to depre-

that Mr. Talon came to Philadelphia on a confidential miſſion from the pretender: He was admitted to a very particular audience with the Preſident, before the arrival of the Miniſter Genet at Philadelphia. To the inſinuations of that envoy muſt be attributed the ſeries of queſtions upon which General Waſhington required the opinion of his Miniſters, and which a chance fatal to the Preſident has ſtript of the veil of ſecrecy which ought forever to have concealed them. Mr. Hamilton was the ſoul of this ſyſtem of enmity; and the writings with which he filled the papers, under the ſignature of *Pacificus*, were, according to all likelihood, the juſtification and development of the opinions which he expreſſed in council.

What was to be expected from an adminiſtration ſo evidently ill-diſpoſed againſt the infant Republic? All that has been ſeen to have followed: A wavering neutrality, abandoned to the influence of England; ſome condeſcentions, for form ſake, extorted by the unequivocal good will of the nation; but in fact, contradicted by acts marked with the ſtamp of malevolence, a great eagerneſs to ſecure the advantages which circumſtances and a few errors of our agents offered, in order to bring to conſummation the favourite project of drawing cloſer to England, and preparing the triumph of that power.

ciate the moſt diſintereſted opinions. But let facts be brought forward; let any improper connection be ſpecified betwen a ſingle Member of this aſſembly and a foreign power; let the traitors, if there are any, be pointed out, and let them be puniſhed. I am accuſed of being ſtrongly attached to France. The hiſtory of that attachment is quite natural. When I firſt took my ſeat in this houſe France was menaced on all ſides with diſmemberment; as a friend to Liberty; as the Citizen of a free ſtate, could I help experiencing an emotion of ſympathy for a people to whom tyrants conteſted the right of ſelf-government? Was I not to feel it the more as I had ſeen my own country in a ſimilar ſituation? Is it unknown at this day, that the plan of the cabinet of St. James' was to attack us, if the coalition had triumphed? Another reaſon impreſſed me ſtrongly with this attachment for France. When I arrived in Philadelphia, what was my aſtoniſhment to find a total indifference as to the events of Europe! I own this indifference ſhocked me; I own that I ſhuddered when I perceived it was founded on an antipathy, but little diſguiſed againſt republican forms. A natural irreſiſtible feeling impelled me to oppoſe this torrent, and I thought it my duty openly to expreſs contrary opinions."—*Speech of Mr. Nicholas, ſitting of the 22d May 1797.*

The only obſtacle in the way of that project was the marked attachment of the nation, for our cauſe. Conſequently the adminiſtration has omitted nothing for five years back, to depreciate our character in the public opinion. The newſpapers which are known to be under its influence, are filled with invectives and perſonalities againſt this Republic and againſt its agents. The government of the Republic, at every period, and under every ſyſtem, to the very lateſt dates, has been, in thoſe Gazettes, covered with calumny and treated in the moſt abuſive manner. If the *Redacteur* [a French paper under the influence of the Directory] had contained againſt the Federal government the hundredth part of what is daily to be found in the *Gazette of the United States*, againſt the Directory, the Legiſlative body, and in general againſt the Republic, long ago ſome deputies, forward with good reaſon perhaps, would have made a motion calling the Directory to an account on the ſubject. A writer, publicly known to be in the pay of the Britiſh legation, publiſhes periodically in Philadelphia, the moſt atrocious libels againſt us*; and it is almoſt certain that this libeller is encouraged by all thoſe who compoſe the adminiſtration.

Such a ſyſtem could not long have eſcaped the animadverſion of the French government, had not a multitude of cares rivetted its attention in Europe, and without the contradictory accounts of the different individuals employed in this branch of our foreign affairs, who added, by their various ſtories, to the embarraſſment created by circumſtances. Every thing was abandoned to the conflicting paſſions of ſome men, or elſe to the moſt abſolute chance; and our government meddled not in the direction of our political relations with that power, except by a ſentiment of good will, which when unaccompanied with an active vigilance, degenerates, in the eyes of foreigners, into a good nature of which they abuſe with ſcorn. This apathy was carried to ſuch a length, that Citizen Adet, who arrived while the Senate was deliberating upon the treaty of London, appeared ſtruck with aſtoniſhment to learn that there was a treaty

* His name is Cobbel, and he writes under the name of Peter Fore-Epic.

with England on the carpet. It is, no doubt, to the profound ſilence of our government on this ſubject, when he left Paris, that we muſt attribute the paſſive line of conduct he has held in circumſtances ſo important. Genet had given the alarm on the real intentions of the adminiſtration; but his conduct, his paſſions, rendered his reports ſuſpected, and other paſſions, intereſted in a contrary direction, have made promiſes which have only ended in prolonging our ſecurity. As ſoon as the conſtitutional government was ſettled, and that the Directory was in a ſituation to follow any ſyſtem as to external affairs, it could not be long without perceiving how we had been the dupes of America. The treaty of London had completely opened all eyes: The material change which was openly effected in the neutrality of the United States, by virtue of that treaty,* has put the ſeal of duplicity and of falſhood on the aſſurances ſo often repeated, that the treaty ſhould make no change in the ſtate of things which exiſted prior to that treaty. The United States, on the firſt intelligence of our awakening, took for hoſtilities the ending of our exceſſive and patient toleration. General Waſhington, ſeeing the end of his political career darkened by clouds which announced a ſerious diſcontent on the part of the Republic, ſought, by a meaſure equally unjuſt and impolitic, to eſcape its odium: He recalled Mr. Monroe, who has been guilty of the wrong, according to his view of things, of being attached to the principles of our revolution, and of being the open enemy to Britiſh influence, as well as to the ſyſtem which that influence had cauſed to be adopted. He believed it in his power to throw upon Mr. Monroe, and upon his party, all the blame ariſing from the actual ſtate of things, by accuſing him, as it were, of having cauſed it. The reſult of this falſe ſtep has been to leave the Directory abandoned, without any counterpoiſe, to its ſuſpicions; this event has confirmed and encreaſed them, and our meaſures have become more deciſive. Far from explaining our conduct as it was natural by the ſyſtem

* The French miniſter was notified, after the exchange of ratifications, that we ſhould no longer enjoy the advantage, which till then had been granted us, to ſell in the American ports our Engliſh prizes.

which had been purſued heretofore, topics of recrimination have been ſought for, and if poſſible to bring about a rupture. It was eaſy to ſower the mercantile claſſes, by preſenting them with the ſpectacle of the loſſes which our repriſals muſt have occaſioned; and to irritate, at the ſame time, the minds of the reſt of the nation, our conduct has been repreſented to them as the conſequence of a ſyſtem long matured by France, for uſurping in the United States an abſolute influence. General Waſhington had ſketched out the phantom of this plan in the addreſs which preceded his retirement. Mr. Adams completed it, and even coloured it with more warmth than could have been ſuppoſed to belong to him at firſt; ſo that at this day the merchants have been made to believe that we wiſh to ruin them, and declare war againſt them, and the people that we wiſh to enſlave their government.

The Executive Directory after having, by vigorous meaſures, cauſed the French nation to be reſpected, and ſheltered our intereſts from the attacks directed againſt them by the Federal government, ought to neglect nothing to deſtroy theſe falſe impreſſions, by which we ſhould be ſoon reduced, at Philadelphia, to play a part unworthy of the republic: It ought to trace out for its agents a line of conduct which ſhall ſhelter us equally from the ſuſpicion of an improper interference in their internal affairs, and of an indifference which provokes contempt. All the deluſions which the adminiſtration attach to our name, ſhould vaniſh before this open conduct. We have ſo much to gain by conciliating the eſteem of a nation where the public opinion, notwithſtanding the intrigue of a foreign power, has yet preſerved the remains of independence, not to try this ſyſtem which muſt in the long run triumph over prejudice.

The United States are generally either too little regarded, or eſteemed much beyond their importance. Both extremes are the reſult of different judgments upon the morals of that nation. Some ſee in them only a collection of Jews, buſy in deceiving each other; while others, carried away by an enthuſiaſm as little founded, find there, compared to Europe, models of wiſdom and of virtue.

But theſe contrary opinions are formed on a baſis to which the ſtateſman ought not always to allow much importance; the national manners ought not to be conſidered as an infallible datum to judge the people. Independently of what theſe manners may have either praiſe worthy or blameable in America, there is an inconteſtible truth, at which we muſt ſtop, to make of it the ground work of a ſyſtem to be purſued reſpecting that power; it is the importance to which the United States are called. That importance is ſo much the more certain, that the developments which muſt bring it about, will not be checked by any of the obſtacles which would oppoſe it, if the United States were ſo ſituated as to be liable to be involved in the diſſentions of Europe. It is vainly attempted to attribute to circumſtances, the progreſs which the United States have made, ſince the adoption of their new conſtitution, a period when the internal troubles of France and the misfortune of its colonies began. Independently of theſe accidental cauſes, the United States, by the extent of their territory, the nature of their population, their character and activity, and by the ſituation of their coaſts, are evidently called to exerciſe, in North America, a conſiderable influence. The power which ſhall know how to conciliate them will find in them an intereſting friend, and their neutrality will perhaps be not leſs to be courted than their alliance.

France has a ſtrong intereſt to preſerve a good underſtanding with America. It is leſs the ſituation of her Weſt Indies, which command it, than the poſition of Spain, which might run the greateſt dangers by the combined efforts of England and the United States. Whatever may be the aſcendancy which commerce has given to England in the whole extent of thoſe ſtates, we ſhall always be able to oppoſe ſucceſsfully all political ties which that power might wiſh to eſtabliſh with them. If we may judge by the actual ſtate of the commerce between the United States and Great Britain, one might be led to believe, that the firſt are a colony of the latter, or fear leſt they ſhould once again become ſo. This is the opinion which the miniſter of foreign affairs brought with him from Philadelphia, and, for having expreſſed this opinion, he has deſervedly drawn upon himſelf the

diſfavor of the partiſans of England. This opinion, and the frankneſs with which it has been publiſhed, does ſo much the more honor to the miniſter, as he might, with ſome foundation, have been ſuppoſed to entertain quite another one, by taking into calculation the effect of the intimacies he had formed in the United States. However, he would be wrong if he thence concluded that it is right to leave the United States to themſelves, and treat them with the contempt, this opinion, which is not without ſome truth, inſpires. There are means of oppoſing this impulſe, which the commercial preponderance gives to England, and even to rival, not without ſome ſucceſs, the latter.

What concluſion ſhall we draw from all that preceeds? That the United States and the Republic are, in truth, in a poſition which muſt inſpire fears of a rupture. France, eſpecially, has very ſtrong motives to adhere to the reſentments which form the baſis of her conduct lately. The United States have nothing but ſtrained and precarious pretexts to found their recriminations upon; but the two people are irreſiſtibly drawn towards each other by a correſpondence of intereſts, and by the ſecret but energetic force of a ſimilarity of principles. Theſe two motives for reunion ought to act with great weight upon the two cabinets, and check, on both ſides, the paſſions and pride which might tend to embarraſs the reconciliation. Whatever warmth the Britannic party has ſhewn in its declamations in congreſs; when reſtored to the calm of reflection, and interrogated when their political averſions ſleep, they muſt ſee, if they poſſeſs yet a remnant of national feeling, that England cannot have with the United States an identity of intereſt; that ſooner or later her deſtructive aſcendancy would dictate laws to them; that America, far from having any intereſt in diminiſhing the weight of the counterpoiſe which we oppoſe to the maritime dominion of England, muſt, on the contrary, deſire to ſee us combat, with ſome ſucceſs, that rival of all that proſper.

We, on our ſide, have a great intereſt in favoring the development of the maritime reſources of America, in order to diminiſh the Engliſh power, by taking from it all that does not reſt upon their own capital. The

United States have nothing to wiſh with reſpect to extenſion of territory. The deceitful lure which England could hold out to them, by promiſing them our ſpoils, or thoſe of Spain, would be ruinous to them in its reſult, whatever might be the ſucceſs of the combination which this lure might produce. Every thing, therefore, prompts them to negociate candidly, and to draw cloſer to us. Let Mr. Adams, eſpecially, feel the importance of the part he has to act; let him forget little diſlikes which years ought to have cooled, and which his ſtation does not permit him to liſten to. The Preſident of the United States ought not to avenge the imaginary injuries which the American plenipotentiary may have received in 1782. There is no longer need of recalling little rivalries, now without object, ſince the cotemporaries ſleep in the ſilent tomb. Whatever may be ſaid of his character, and of his enmity towards us, we have every thing to hope from the rectitude of his judgment; but let him keep at a diſtance thoſe men who will continually rekindle in his boſom the fire of paſſions, which it is important for them to perpetuate; let him take the pen himſelf and draw up the inſtructions of his commiſſioners. If he gives up the taſk to the hand which has traced the manifeſto of the 16th January, he imprudently riſks the moſt important intereſts of his country. The republic, after having forced all open enmities to fall at her feet, and all fraudulent neutralities to make reparation, cannot ſacrifice its reputation nor its treaſures, when ſhe is to treat upon a ſtate of things which bears every character of hoſtility.

On our ſide, let us forget the wrongs of an adminiſtration, the chief of which had more weakneſs than malevolence: Our ſucceſſes have avenged us ſufficiently on our hidden enemies and coward friends. Let us make the ſacrifice of our reſentments, however juſt they may be, to our evident intereſts. The preſent criſis, checked in time, will have a ſalutary effect: If prolonged, with the circumſtances which have accompanied it hitherto, it would perpetuate painful recollections, and would perhaps become the germ of a national hatred, which would not have any of thoſe real or imaginary ad-

vantages which make thoſe hatreds ſometimes to be conſidered as a political engine.

The ſentiments I profeſs were always thoſe of my heart; they were the baſis of my conduct while I reſided in the United States. I am perfectly convinced, that they will find their true value when they ſhall reach there, and will contribute to diſſipate prejudices which unfortunate circumſtances, or inimical arts may have ſcattered and fomented, with reſpect to me, with men who teſtified for me an eſteem, which I ſhall always conſider it an honor to deſerve.

Fructidor, 4th Year.

ERRATA.

Page 6th, firſt note, for *Pickering* read *Pinckney*.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY